

on a short-term continuing resolution to do just that. I hope my colleagues will vote in favor of a clean continuing resolution to avert a government shutdown. There is no justification to shut down government. Yes, we have our differences. We negotiate that in a budget process.

However, we know that this is a short-term fix and that a real solution to fixing our Nation's very real and very serious budget problems is in producing a long-term budget, and we should do that in December.

Instead of moving from one crisis to another crisis, we must get back to the work of governing responsibly. Responsible governance requires that we come together, work hard, compromise on a bipartisan budget that will not result in poorly thought-out, across-the-board spending cuts, more commonly known as sequestration.

Failing to govern responsibly and compromise will negatively impact industries so vital to America. That includes our agriculture economy, which provides the food that we eat on America's dinner table. It includes manufacturing and service industries that provide goods and services that we trade.

Finally, it will severely impact some programs that support our Nation's future, like health care, education, public safety, and research and development, costing billions of dollars and thousands of jobs.

In addition to negotiating a bipartisan budget agreement, we need to address the impacts of sequestration and the Congress must address the debt ceiling this December without fanfare that could further throw our economy into chaos.

If the United States were to default on its loans or fail to live up to our promises to those of retirement age, it would send our economy in a downward spiral just at the time that we are finally recovering from this Great Recession.

Unfortunately, not all the areas of the United States are feeling the recovery's effects equally. In the San Joaquin Valley that I represent, many of my constituents are still feeling the effects of the recession, in addition to the unnecessary impacts of our failure to invest in infrastructure, our water infrastructure that we terribly need to invest in as well as our transportation infrastructure.

Vital programs, like the Ex-Im Bank, the highway trust fund, the Land and Water Conservation Fund, have either expired or will soon expire. The Export-Import Bank's charter which was created has sustained 1½ million private sector jobs and expired June 30.

By refusing to bring up the reauthorization of the Bank for a vote, American jobs are being threatened and Congress is undermining the ability of American businesses to compete in a global market.

The highway trust fund is set to expire on October 29. Our Nation's roads, bridges, highways, and railroads are

out of date and are in dire need of repair. I have never seen a bridge or road that is Republican or Democrat. This is just investing in America.

A long-term transportation bill was last passed by Congress in 2009. Since then, Congress has had 34 short-term patches. That is simply irresponsible. This not only puts American's safety at risk, but completely undermines our ability to create and sustain American jobs by investing in our infrastructure.

Congress must act to work on a bipartisan basis to reauthorize these programs and countless other Federal programs that are set to expire not only this week, but in December, when we address long-term funding for the next fiscal year. Otherwise, there will be another threat to shut down government in December. It is irresponsible.

Last week Pope Francis reminded us of our responsibilities, the better angels in all of us. He said, "A good political leader is one who, with the interests of all in mind, seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism. A good political leader always opts to initiate processes rather than simply possessing spaces."

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Therefore, the question we should be asking: Are we simply possessing spaces or are we trying to find together the common good for the common man, as Pope Francis suggested?

I hope his spiritual guidance will allow us to work together to do what we were sent here to do, which is the people's work. That is what we were sent here to do on behalf of all Americans.

AGRICULTURE HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of two Future Farmers of America teams from my district after they placed first and second at a national competition this past weekend.

The competition, known as "The Big E," hosts teams from schools from the East Coast and the Mid-Atlantic regions which compete in a wide variety of categories, including poultry science, equine events, dairy science, and much more.

A team from Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, Centre County, placed first in the poultry science career development event and was responsible for judging the birds and rating their quality along with other criteria.

The second team, from the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology in Pleasant Gap, Pennsylvania, Centre County, placed second in the nursery and landscaping division. They were tasked with designing and selling a landscaping plan. The team is now working on a landscape project for Pennsylvania's farm show in January.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the accomplishments of these future farmers and also recognize the important work performed by the FFA. The success of these young people shows that the industry is in good hands and agriculture has a bright future.

PUT AN END TO TRAGIC AND WASTEFUL SPENDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, the foolish and wasteful squandering of Americans' hard-earned taxpayer dollars are once again on display in the war in the Middle East and in Syria. Before I get to my point, I want to remind my colleagues here that we spent \$3 trillion on the war in Iraq. That is right, \$3 trillion. Look where it has gotten us.

I would like to remind my colleagues that for one of those trillion we could have graduated every college kid in America and vocational school kid in America debt free. Instead, we have saddled them with debt that is crippling their ability to get ahead and our economy to grow.

It is no secret that bridges are falling down here in America and trains are coming off the rails. For one of those trillion dollars, we could have rebuilt our infrastructure and transportation system in this country, once again creating good jobs and opportunities and laying the foundation for our economy to grow.

For another trillion of those dollars, we could have given the American taxpayers a trillion-dollar tax break. Would they not have loved that and do they not need that? Instead, we are still looking at \$2 trillion going forward in taking care of the men and women who served: the warriors, the patriots, the men and women who were willing to stand up and protect us, but who lost arms and lost legs and suffered severe brain injuries. Yes, that is right, \$2 trillion going forward, tending to and caring for them. And that is a moral obligation that we are obligated to and must fulfill.

Now to my point today. Last year the Congress authorized \$500 million to be spent on training the so-called moderate Free Syrian rebels, and now we have learned that only a handful, like four to five, has shown up for duty, according to Lloyd Austin, the U.S. Central Commander for troops in the Middle East.

Back in June, Republican Congressman CURT CLAWSON and I offered an amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill to stop funding this so-called Free Syrian rebel program. Why? Well, the hard, cold fact is that many of their leaders told us at the time that they would not use the money to fight and join us in the fight against ISIL. Now we ask the House not to appropriate an additional \$600 million, seeing that the \$500 million that was spent has already been wasted and misspent.